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Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8396th meeting
Tuesday, 13 November 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu	(China)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Mr. Woldegerima
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Mr. Lewicki
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Sweden	Ms. Vaverka
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2421 (2018) (S/2018/975)

Twentieth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2018/976)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2421 (2018) (S/2018/975)

Twentieth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2018/976)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Iraq to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/975, which contains the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2421 (2018), as well as to document S/2018/976, which contains the twentieth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013).

I now give the floor to Mr. Kubiš.

Mr. Kubiš: Following the certification of the election results on 19 August, the Government formation process moved forward with the election of Mohammad Al-Halbousi as Speaker of the Council of Representatives, on 15 September, and Barham Salih as President of Iraq, on 2 October, who then nominated Mr. Adil Abdul-Mahdi as Prime Minister-designate.

On 24 October, the Iraqi Parliament reviewed the new governmental programme, endorsed 14 out of 22 Cabinet ministers, and confirmed Mr. Abdul-Mahdi as Prime Minister. Of the five sovereign ministries, Finance, Foreign Affairs and Oil were endorsed, but the ministries of Defence and Interior are yet to be allocated. No female or minority candidates were appointed to ministerial positions, but the Prime Minister intends to consider them for governmental posts and other key positions in subsequent rounds of Government formation.

While the Government formation process has not been without controversies, the political blocs have demonstrated a willingness to act in support of the Prime Minister. Competition and differences have been largely political and not sectarian, and in this way they represent a break from the past. The guidance of the supreme Shia religious authority, Grand Ayatollah Al-Sistani, has significantly influenced the process. The main negotiations with Prime Minister Abdul-Mahdi have been led by cleric Muqtada Al-Sadr of the Sairoun Alliance and Mr. Hadi Al-Ameri of the Fatah Alliance on behalf of their coalitions — Islah and Binaa, respectively. All of these primary partners and political forces now share a responsibility for creating an enabling environment for the new Prime Minister and Government to deliver on its programme, and for its stability. The support of all the political forces represented in Parliament, including those who will now be in the opposition for the first time since 2003, will be essential. Barring this, Iraq's political forces and leaders will fail their people.

The Government's programme, which includes advisory inputs from the United Nations, represents a general outline of a national project to respond to the needs and demands of the Iraqi people. As stated in the programme, its focus and pillar should be the citizen. The programme outlines specific plans for reforms, investment and the private sector with a view to transitioning Iraq from a crisis context to sustainable development; recommends steps to tackle corruption across all sectors; and sets out a framework to guide the planning and work of each ministry. In addition to delivering tangible improvements in the daily lives of Iraqi citizens, a key focus area of the programme includes job creation for the unemployed, young people in particular.

The rehabilitation and reconstruction of liberated areas and the return of internally displaced persons are also key priorities. The programme aims at strengthening security, fighting terrorism and enhancing law and order and the rule of law, among others, by putting all arms under the strict control of the State. It also stresses the prevention of militia formations outside the framework of the State and the withdrawal of troops from the cities. The programme confirms that special attention will be given to resolving pending challenges with the Kurdistan region, including the issues of

budget allocation and financial resources, oil and disputed areas.

I commend the exemplary democratic transfer of power between the outgoing Prime Minister, Haider Al Abadi, and incoming Prime Minister Abdul-Mahdi. At the handover ceremony on 25 October, Mr. Al Abadi recalled the achievements of his Government in defeating Da'esh and uniting the country based on the Constitution, at a time when the economic situation had deteriorated owing to deep-rooted corruption and a massive decrease in oil prices. He recalled the return of millions of displaced families to liberated areas and the establishment of a national army and security forces. He also noted improved relations with all of Iraq's neighbours, including the Arab countries. Finally, he underlined that political processes in Iraq have witnessed a gradual departure from sectarian approaches and rhetoric. For all of this, he and his Government, the Kurdistan Regional Government, diverse armed forces and formations, and the people of Iraq deserve acknowledgment and gratitude.

Iraq must now build on these foundations. The new Government intends to start immediately, particularly on the delivery of services and jobs, reforming and energizing the economy, and fighting corruption and administrative red tape. In this regard, Iraq will require and counts on the continued support of the international community. We must not let the country down.

On 30 October, the results of the Kurdistan region parliamentary elections, held on 30 September, were approved. The first session of the new Kurdistan regional parliament took place on 6 November, but failed to elect its speaker and the two deputies. The dominant Kurdistan Democratic Party now intends to consult with all Kurdistan region political parties, notably the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, on the Government formation.

The new Government of Iraq intends to introduce robust measures to further improve and achieve sustainable security throughout the country, intensifying efforts to uproot Da'esh terrorist cells to counter this insurgency. Reports of the arrests of Da'esh terrorists and their leaders or on the elimination of sleeper cells and hideouts are issued almost daily.

Security measures put in place for the Arba'een pilgrimage were successful. Among the 15 million pilgrims, close to 2 million foreign visitors were recorded to have legally and safely entered Iraq. Efforts to disturb this massive movement of people failed.

Most of Da'esh's movements in recent months have reportedly been through the desert joining central Iraq and its Anbar and Ninawa provinces to the western border with the Syria. In response, Iraq has deployed thousands of troops on its border with that neighbouring country to curb Da'esh, which remains in control of several areas across the border in the Syrian Deir ez-Zor province. Also, Da'esh remains active in some other Iraqi provinces, notably in Kirkuk, Salah ad-Din and Diyala.

The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) continues to advocate justice and accountability for international crimes. On 6 November, UNAMI and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights jointly launched a report entitled *Unearthing Atrocities: Mass Graves in Territory Formerly Controlled by ISIL*. At least 202 mass graves have been discovered in Iraq, and they are believed to contain the remains of many thousands of victims of atrocities perpetrated by Da'esh. I am pleased to report that the Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh, Mr. Karim Khan, arrived in Iraq on 30 October.

In October, UNAMI established a women's advisory group on reconciliation and politics in Iraq, which will serve as a political inclusion mechanism to ensure that the voices, concerns and experiences of Iraqi women are included in political processes that shape national reconciliation based on the principles of peaceful coexistence, respect for diversity and non-discrimination.

Nearly two years after the defeat of Da'esh by Iraqi security forces and coalition allies, more than 1.9 million Iraqis remain displaced, primarily in the north and west of the country. Although 4 million people have returned home since the end of the conflict, the rate of return has decreased significantly. Humanitarian actors and the UNAMI senior women's protection adviser are also concentrating on how to best strengthen the centrality of protection around women and children with perceived affiliations with extremist groups.

A critical barrier to the return of internally displaced persons is that the need for residential buildings to be cleared of mines by mine action actors remains unmet. The Funding Facility for Stabilization

reached a significant milestone, having now completed 1,517 projects across all nine sectors of work in the five liberated governorates of the country. There are 245 new projects already tendered, but they will not be implemented without additional donor support. We also urge the Government to begin making its own contributions to donor-funded international development programmes, including those under the Facility.

The need for concrete results in public projects beyond the current focus on liberated areas is perhaps most evident in the southern city and province of Basra. There, a combination of water scarcity and high levels of contamination in supplies of drinking water led to more than 100,000 being admitted to hospital with symptoms of gastroenteritis between mid-August and mid-October.

On 28 October, the Government of Iraq chaired the first formal meeting of the Executive Committee on Recovery, Reconstruction and Development. This high-level committee is mandated to provide a coordination platform for strategic guidance on national priorities to take forward the work set out at the International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq, held in Kuwait in February. This signals the Government's determined shift towards development and investment.

I am delighted to report that on 11 and 13 November, respectively, after over a year of preparations, President Salih and representatives of the Iraqi Ministry for Foreign Affairs delivered to the Kuwaiti Ministry for Foreign Affairs numerous items of property taken during the invasion of Kuwait, including over 2,300 books, an archive of Kuwaiti television videotapes, a sword and a valuable painting. I welcome this clear indication of commitment by the Government of Iraq to resolving the complex file of outstanding issues with Kuwait. When I met the new Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, Mr. Mohamed Alhakim, on 5 November, he assured me that he would give the greatest attention to and support for efforts on this important file.

In conclusion, as this is my last report to the Security Council in my current capacity, I would like to express my gratitude to you, Mr. President, your predecessors and the members of the Security Council for the support you have kindly provided to me during the three years and nine months I have served in my post. I would also like to express my highest appreciation to UNAMI and United Nations country team staff for their dedication, professionalism, proactive efforts and unwavering commitment to working in support of UNAMI and United Nations mandates serving Iraq and its people. I would also like to express my gratitude to and appreciate for Ms. Alice Walpole, my Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, and Ms. Marta Ruedas, my Deputy Special Representative for Humanitarian Affairs and Development, for their cooperation, capable leadership and management of United Nations activities across Iraq.

Finally, I would like to warmly welcome my successor, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, and wish her success in leading the Mission and in helping Iraq to achieve a durable and sustainable peace, stability and prosperity for its people. I encourage the authorities and society of Iraq to offer Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert the same generous support and cooperation that they have shown to me during my tenure. I have the honour of serving the United Nations and Iraq during a particularly difficult period that has against all odds and scepticism ended well, with promising future prospects for the country and its people. Iraq is a success, a positive story in a region marked by many negative trends and developments. The United Nations in Iraq has shown its relevance and will continue to build on the firm foundations of its partnership with Iraq and its people.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Kubiš for his briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I want to express our special thanks to Special Representative Kubiš for his comprehensive briefing on the latest developments in Iraq, to congratulate him on a successful three years and nine months of service, and to thank him for his exception leadership of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) during this pivotal chapter in Iraq's history. On a personal note, having worked with him in Iraq for the first half of his tenure, I wish to thank him for his tireless efforts in very challenging circumstances and for his consistent wise counsel and friendship over these years. His ability to engage with Iraqi stakeholders from all walks of life has illustrated for all of us UNAMI's vital role in facilitating critical political dialogue and showed the great potential that UNAMI has to make positive impact in Iraq. We, along with the rest of the Security

Council, also look forward to working closely with his successor, Special Representative-designate Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, when she begins her tenure in December.

Since the Council's last UNAMI briefing (see S/PV.8324), Iraq has a new President and Prime Minister, which deserves the Security Council's congratulations. Iraq's new Government is poised to make a serious of important decisions that will set the course of the country's history for decades to come. We encourage the new Government to focus on tackling corruption and delivering essential services to all of its people, including its many diverse communities of all ethnicities and faiths. We also call on Iraq's new leaders to promote the participation and representation of women at all levels.

The United States has pledged to work closely with President Salih, Prime Minister Abdul-Mahdi and Council of Representatives Speaker Al-Halbousi to deliver stability, security and prosperity for all Iraqis. Much work remains to be done and bold leadership will be required. The credibility of the new Government hinges on providing access to jobs, clean water and electricity. It is vital that the Government deliver on those essential services as swiftly as possible.

We also call on the new Government to ensure the voluntary, safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons who suffered so greatly from terror at the hands of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Shams (ISIS). The atrocities committed by ISIS cannot go unpunished, and we call on the new Government to work closely with the newly established United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL to swiftly begin evidence-based investigations on the ground, as mandated by resolution 2379 (2017).

As Iraq continues to grapple with terrorist threats, even after the defeat of ISIS, we must remember that no threat of violence can reverse the spirit of the Iraqi people. We are encouraged by the stories of the many Iraqis who have returned to their homes and are beginning to rebuild their communities. The UNAMI mandate underscores the importance of supporting Iraq and meeting the needs of all Iraqis, including women, youth and members of all religious and ethnic groups. We strongly encourage Iraq's new leaders to work closely with UNAMI to address the unique needs of those groups and individuals as part and parcel of the broader national and community-level reconciliation effort that Iraq needs to undertake. Iraq's new leaders should also work closely with UNAMI to help create the conditions that will allow the Iraqi people to shape their own future, free of outside interference.

Iraq has once again entered a key moment in its history, making major strides towards a more stable, secure and democratic future. Now Iraq's leaders have the task of showing that they can deliver on the high expectations of their people. The United States stands ready to support Iraq in achieving that goal.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), for his valuable briefing.

Despite the many challenges that Iraq is facing in the post-Da'esh period, the Iraqi people have proven themselves capable of rebuilding their country and of confronting the challenges facing them in order to strengthen the principles of democracy in their country, as reflected in the mid-May parliamentary elections. The outcome of the elections has been accepted and confirmed and the country has seen a peaceful transfer of power, which has allowed a new Iraqi Government to be established within the time frame set by the Constitution.

I take this opportunity to sincerely congratulate, on behalf of the State of Kuwait, the leadership, the Government and the people of Iraq on the election of His Excellency Mr. Barham Salih as President of the Republic of Iraq and His Excellency Mr. Mohammed Al-Halbousi as Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the appointment of His Excellency Mr. Adil Abdul-Mahdi as the Prime Minister to head the new Government. We are fully confident that all of them are trustworthy, and we wish them every success as they make efforts in the best interests of our brotherly Iraq in order to fulfil all the aspirations of its people, who deserve to live in a stable, prosperous and safe State. We hope that the full Cabinet of the new Government will be appointed soon because the post-election phase is very critical in Iraq. We believe that those positive developments are promising and reflect positively on the situation in Iraq and indeed in the entire region.

It is high time for Iraq to be able to recover from the painful tragedies that it suffered over the past few years at the hands of the terrorist group Da'esh. The State

of Kuwait renews its solidarity with the leadership, the people and the Government of Iraq in their efforts to defeat terrorism and entrench Iraqi national unity, while preserving the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country. We were delighted to host the Iraqi President in Kuwait just two days ago, which speaks volumes of the links that tie our two countries together and allow us to move sincerely forward together to serve the interests of our two peoples.

Allow me now to address two points: first, UNAMI responsibilities under its mandate; and secondly, the commitments pertaining to the Kuwaiti and third-party nationals who have been reported missing, and the lost Kuwaiti property, including the national archives of Kuwait.

With regard to the first point, I would like to commend the United Nations staff in Iraq for their tireless efforts to forge a promising future for that country through its ongoing advice and assistance to the Government and the people of Iraq, as well as all stakeholders in the framework of a partnership that brings together UNAMI and the United Nations country team. That partnership is apparent in many much-needed areas.

In that regard, I underline the continued full support of the State of Kuwait to and its cooperation with the Mission and the country team to allow them to fully carry out their tasks. The aim is to meet the needs of Iraq. We are very well aware of the scale of the major challenges facing Iraq. That requires the full support of the international community in order to ensure its stability and security.

We are completely convinced that security and stability cannot be achieved without sustainable development in its various dimensions. We will continue to provide all kinds of support to the brotherly Iraqi people so that they can meet their needs.

The International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq was hosted by Kuwait in February, with the cooperation of Iraq, the United Nations, the European Union and the World Bank. The pledges we made at the Conference demonstrated international and regional solidarity with our Iraqi brothers to heal the wounds inflicted by Da'esh. I refer to the programmes of rehabilitation and reconstruction for cities liberated from terrorism. We shoulder our responsibilities towards the humanitarian situation of our Iraqi brothers. That is a response to the humanitarian appeals of the United Nations to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people, particularly displaced persons, in order to let Iraq achieve its future vision of a new and united country.

Our concern today is that terrorist groups continue to pose a threat to the security and stability of Iraq and the region, despite the fact that Da'esh has been defeated. That is why we must all pull together, step up our efforts and take more critical measures in order to ensure that the perpetrators of those horrifying crimes are accountable and brought to justice. The State of Kuwait counts on the efforts made by the Iraqi authorities to arrest and prosecute the perpetrators of those terrorist acts, in coordination and cooperation with the international mechanism involved in collecting evidence, which was established by resolution 2379 (2017). Those are critical steps within the broader framework of the global counter-terrorism strategy.

I turn now to my second point regarding the commitments made to the Kuwaiti and third-party nationals who have been reported missing, and the lost Kuwaiti property, including the national archives of Kuwait. That is an important issue due to its legitimate human and legal dimensions. The State of Kuwait appreciates the efforts that have been made by the Security Council to implement all the remaining commitments pursuant to its relevant resolutions since the liberation of Kuwait in 1991. We commend the firm resolve of Iraq to meet all its international commitments towards the State of Kuwait in that regard. We are ready to provide the support that Iraq needs in order to speed up the implementation of the remaining commitments stipulated in the relevant Council resolutions.

At the same time, we urge UNAMI to continue to fully discharge its mandate pertaining to the missing prisoners and the return of Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, pursuant to resolution 2107 (2013). The steps that have been taken so far are insufficient and no significant progress has been made since 2004.

We underscore that the State of Kuwait has spared no effort to support measures over the past 28 years to uncover the fate of its missing Kuwaitis and other third-country individuals. In that regard, we cannot but commend the efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross in chairing the tripartite mechanism, including its Technical Subcommittee. At the same time, I thank the United Kingdom, France and the United States for their recent positive contributions by providing the Subcommittee with satellite images

and maps dating back to the relevant period from 1990 to 1992. We hope that those contributions will yield positive results on the ground.

I should like to draw the Council's attention to another issue related to the remaining commitments, namely, the question of Kuwaiti assets, including the national archives, which represent our historic wealth and an important part of the national heritage and memory of the Kuwaiti people. Unfortunately, we do not know what has become of them. We therefore hope to follow a new and innovative approach with a view to making progress in that area. At the same time, we welcome the efforts of the Iraqi authorities to return to the State of Kuwait the books and other assets that have been found, despite taking more than a year to accomplish that.

In conclusion, the State of Kuwait appreciates the valuable efforts of Mr. Kubiš as Head of UNAMI and Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Iraq. We commend his dedication and personal commitment over the past three years, and wish him every success in his future endeavours.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I join others in thanking Special Representative Ján Kubiš for his briefing, which comes at a critical time for Iraq. I also welcome his personal commitment to doing the job that he is leaving and that he carried out with exemplary determination in difficult circumstances. I will discuss the latest developments relating to the electoral process, the remaining challenges that must be met so as to achieve a stable, inclusive and prosperous Iraq, and France's full support for those efforts and the work of the United Nations.

First, as Ján Kubiš just made clear, we have seen a decisive transformation in Iraq this past year. Iraq was able to defeat Da'esh militarily and meet the challenge presented by parliamentary elections and political transition. Despite difficulties, the peaceful organization of the electoral process within the timeframe set by the Constitution — one year after the military victory over Da'esh — is testimony to the country's recovery. We welcome that progress and the appointment of new Iraqi authorities.

Despite the tense regional and social environment, the formation of the Government has demonstrated a sense of responsibility on the part of the various actors during the transition period. The relevant figures who have emerged following the process, including the Prime Minister, will be solid assets for the future. We hope that the confirmation of the remaining eight ministers will take place soon. The new Iraqi Government must concentrate without delay on the road map for electoral, economic and financial reform, as well as the reform of the security sector, all of which are imperative.

Secondly, if that auspicious dynamic is to continue, much remains to be done. First of all, Iraq's stability, which is crucial to preventing the resurgence of Da'esh in any form, is a major issue for the region and our own national security. We will remain mobilized in the fight against terrorism, alongside the Iraqi security forces, and in support for the international coalition's efforts to counter Da'esh to end that persistent threat definitively.

On the ground, Iraq continues to contend with nearly 2 million internally displaced persons, who must continue to be provided with assistance. The primary goal of the international community — the stabilization of the country — entails assisting with the voluntary and safe return of displaced persons and ensuring security, mine clearance and restoring basic services, without which the prospects for sustainable return will remain dim. More generally, however, as France has continued to emphasize, only national reconciliation and inclusive governance serving the interests of all sectors of Iraqi society will make it possible to defeat terrorism. France is committed to helping the new Iraqi Government meet the challenges of national reconciliation and inclusive governance.

I stress the importance of women's role in the political process. France calls for progress in that area. I also recall the important role that the Iraqi justice system, which must be seen as exemplary and beyond reproach, must play in ensuring that all those responsible for crimes be tried with respect for the rule of law. We also encourage ongoing efforts to resume negotiations with Erbil so as to resolve pending disputes. The stability of the country requires that the Kurds be afforded their rightful place within a united Iraq that respects its own diversity. In that regard, France commends the measures put in place by Ján Kubiš, which were decisive in resolving the crisis triggered by the independence referendum.

The priority that we must collectively accord to the reconstruction of the country is one of the keys to its future. Iraq will be able to consolidate its institutions only if the Government moves quickly to implement the recovery and resilience programme established at the

Kuwait International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq, which the entire international community has supported. I recall that Iraq will be incapable of rebuilding itself if it is held hostage to regional tensions. Dissociation is an imperative both for Iraqi leaders and for external Powers.

Lastly, I reiterate that France fully supports the people of Iraq in facing those challenges, which are linked to their sovereignty and unity. France has donated nearly €60 million to Iraq since 2017, in addition to a budget loan of 430€ million. That aid is based on responding to humanitarian needs and supporting the stabilization of territories liberated from Da'esh control. France also wishes to fully support Iraq during its reconstruction phase, which has just begun, and will remain fully engaged with the Iraqi people in the coming months.

In conclusion, I commend the role played by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) under the leadership of Ján Kubiš, particularly over the past several months. Iraq is stronger and more inclusive and stable today, and together we can all thank Ján Kubiš for his crucial contribution to that progress and encourage UNAMI to stay the course in according priority to supporting governance and national reconciliation.

Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), for his excellent briefing, and expresses its appreciation for the work that he has accomplished since 2015. As his mandate draws to an end, it is an agreeable duty for us to express our gratitude and admiration to him and his entire UNAMI team.

Following the successful holding of parliamentary elections on 12 May, the Iraqi Council of Representatives freely elected Mr. Barham Salih as President of the Republic on 10 October. The appointment of Mr. Adil Abdul-Mahdi as Prime Minister will allow the timely formation of a Government that will address, inter alia, security issues, including the threat that the Islamic State continues to pose in Iraq. Moreover, the official visit by President Salih to Kuwait on 10 November led to discussions on strengthening relations between the two States. Similarly, the outcome of the Kuwait International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq, organized under the auspices of the United Nations, Iraq and Kuwait, is likely to further consolidate such cooperation in the region.

Côte d'Ivoire hopes that the new Government, which is the product of various consultations, will create conditions conducive to genuine reconciliation among the Iraqi people and lasting stability, while respecting unity and sociopolitical and ethnic diversity. The Government must spare no effort to meet its many challenges, which will include, among other things, finding sustainable solutions to the issue of the dignified return of internally displaced persons by providing them with basic administrative and social services, while ramping up the reconstruction of conflict-affected areas and ensuring women's equal representation in institutions and decision-making structures.

Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the constructive dialogue between Iraq's central Government and the authorities of the Kurdistan autonomous region, which is aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the dispute arising from the 25 September 2017 referendum on Kurdistan's self-determination. The dialogue initiative has enabled the Erbil and Sulaymaniyah airports to reopen for international flights. My country hopes that the next meetings between the Prime Minister of Iraq and Mr. Nechirvan Barzani, Prime Minister of the Kurdistan region, will finally enable them to settle the question of the contested internal borders and the status of Kirkuk province, as well as the management of oil and gas and the revenue from those resources.

My delegation welcomes the efforts of the Government of Iraq and the international community to prosecute the perpetrators of serious crimes. We also welcome the visit to Iraq on 30 April by the needs assessment mission of the Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)/Da'esh, as well as the appointment on 31 May of Mr. Karim Asad Ahmad Khan to head the Investigative Team, pursuant to the relevant provisions of Security Council resolution 2379 (2017). The recent discovery of 200 mass graves containing thousands of bodies in areas previously under the control of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant is convincing evidence of the urgent need for the Investigative Team to intensify its work on the ground and create a national database similar to those established in Bosnia and Rwanda in order to identify the victims of such barbarity as soon as possible.

My country urges the international community to continue focusing sustained attention on the reconstruction efforts undertaken by Iraq's central authorities with regard to implementing its security-sector reform programme, so that the country can maintain professional defence and security forces that are committed to respecting the rule of law and human rights.

Mr. Safronkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Historically, Iraq has been an important factor for stability in the Middle East. Russia supports constructive steps aimed at strengthening Iraq's domestic political situation and ensuring the country's security and socioeconomic development in full respect for its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. We note the enormous contribution of the United Nations and Special Representative Kubiš in stabilizing the situation in Iraq. We know that this is a result of his ability to establish constructive and mutually respectful dialogue between all the political stakeholders in Iraq.

We were pleased to see that the parliamentary elections held in May culminated in the election of the Republic's top leadership. We emphasize that Russia respects the sovereign choice of the Iraqi people and we urge everyone to do the same.

We welcome our Iraqi partners' successful and decisive efforts to combat the terrorist threat. Much has been done on the counter-terrorism front, and the so-called caliphate of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has been dealt a crushing blow. We believe that this was achieved partly thanks to the uncompromising war on terrorism being waged in neighbouring Syria. Russia has contributed to that effort. But despite these successes, the security situation in Iraq remains fragile. ISIL members remain active in a number of Iraqi provinces, hiding in areas that are hard to reach or posing as refugees or locals. Terrorist attacks are still their weapon of choice. We categorically condemn any acts of terror, express our sympathies with the Government and the people of Iraq and the families of victims, and wish the wounded a speedy recovery. We believe that the only effective way to combat this challenge is by coordinating our counter-terrorism efforts. The initiative of President Putin of Russia to create a broad coalition of States to fight terrorism is as relevant as ever.

Restoring the economy, the social arena and national livelihoods generally is crucial for the Iraqi leadership. The international community should help Baghdad to develop comprehensive measures aimed at improving socioeconomic conditions, and in that regard we acknowledge the International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq held in February in Kuwait.

We want to draw attention to the priority of providing assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons, which, incidentally, is highlighted in the Secretary-General's latest report on the situation in Iraq (S/2018/975). Needless to say, it must be done jointly and without double standards, whether in Iraq, Syria or any other similar context.

Russia has been supporting the Iraqi leadership's efforts on the security front and on long-term normalization of the situation both politically and practically. We are helping to strengthen the Iraqi army and implementing effective collaboration on regional security issues within the framework of the quadrilateral coordination centre in Baghdad, and we are expanding bilateral trade and economic ties. We welcome Baghdad's use of bilateral communication channels with partners in the region, its implementation of a good-neighbourliness policy and normalization of relations with regional Powers. Baghdad and Kuwait's willingness to work to resolve as soon as possible the legacy of all the problematic issues resulting from the first Gulf War deserves particular support. As United Nations High-level Coordinators at various stages of the process, Russia's Ambassadors Vorontsov and Tarasov also contributed to resolving this humanitarian issue.

We are concerned about the possible negative effects on Iraq's fragile internal political situation as a result of the artificial intensification of the situation surrounding the Islamic Republic of Iran. Iraq has the right to build and develop normal relations with its Iranian neighbours, and no one has the right to undermine those relations. We want to emphasize once again the importance of launching dialogue mechanisms in the region rather than sanctions and threats, especially since the experience of that kind of cooperation exists and has been developed.

Russia will continue to play an active role in the Middle East, based on its historically friendly and healthy relations with Iraq and other States of the region. We are open to collaborating with regional and international partners. Our shared efforts would

be seriously helped by the promotion of a security and cooperation architecture based on the assumption that any issues that might arise would be resolved through mutually respectful dialogue, not threats of force.

We would like to conclude on a positive note with regard to the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq. We believe that it should continue to prioritize assisting in the promotion of the national reconciliation processes that are essential to achieving the country's long-term stability. For our part, in all our contacts with all of Iraq's political forces, we encourage them to unite their efforts through inclusive dialogue aimed at reaching consensus agreements that take the interests of all ethnic and religious groups into consideration. We want to express our gratitude to all the Mission staff working in difficult conditions, and personally to Special Representative Kubiš. We very much appreciate his professional and personal qualities, which have enabled him to earn the respect of all Iraqi political forces, and we wish him every success in his new important post.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): We would like to express special thanks to Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his productive and effective work for more than three years in his capacity as Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) at a critical time for Iraq. Kazakhstan commends his skilful and persistent efforts to cope with multiple challenges and help guide Iraq on a positive track towards recovery and development. We support the UNAMI's endeavours to assist the Iraqi people, promote political dialogue, and establish Government institutions.

We congratulate Iraq on the election of its new President, His Excellency Mr. Barham Salih, the appointment of Prime-Minister-designate Adil Abdul-Mahdi and the partial formation of his new Cabinet. Kazakhstan extends its sincere congratulations to the Parliament, people and all political actors in Iraq on their efforts to overcome serious challenges and build Government institutions. We acknowledge that these are bold steps towards strengthening democracy, State-building and consolidating Iraqi society around the country's Constitution.

Kazakhstan expresses the hope that, as a matter of priority, the new Government of Iraq will take measures to restore social and economic structures and meet the urgent needs of the local population. Kazakhstan calls on the representatives of various political parties to support the newly appointed Prime Minister. Their support is essential to improve the social status of citizens, meet the needs of the people and strengthen the Iraqi economy. We hope that senior officials of Iraq will make an important contribution to the prevention of religious and inter-tribal tensions in the country.

Kazakhstan reaffirms its position on the adherence to territorial integrity, unity and respect for the sovereignty of Iraq. We certainly support continued and constructive dialogue between the federal Government of Iraq and the regional Government of Iraqi Kurdistan. We commend the fact that the Government continues the process of electing senior officials despite the tense situation in the Middle East, the threats posed by Da'esh and the difficult internal socioeconomic situation. We feel confident the new Iraqi Government will strive to pursue an independent foreign policy and pay no attention to the interests of various political parties and outside forces.

We strongly condemn the recent deadly bombings that targeted the residential areas of Baghdad and Sadr City, and we wish speedy recovery to those injured. Undoubtedly, those crimes and acts aim to break the spirit of the Iraqis, in particular Baghdadis, who have started to enjoy the fruits of peace and who fear the derailment of their country's steady progress towards stability. The unity of people and decisive efforts of the security forces are certain to foil the designs of terrorists.

We commend UNAMI for its efforts to work with civil society, especially women's groups, for Iraq's recovery. Women, once empowered, can make a dynamic contribution to the peace process, with a leading role in decision-making and mobilizing the grass roots. We also appreciate the commitment of the Special Representative to engage the youth in training for democracy building and other developmental activities. Community awareness and constructive programmes are especially critical to prevent young people from relapsing into violent extremism.

We were saddened and horrified to learn of the more than 200 mass graves containing the remains of thousands of victims in areas of the country formerly controlled by Da'esh. We strongly condemn those horrific crimes committed in Iraq, which have caused immense and unimaginable trauma for the victims' families. That tragedy once again confirms that all

measures must be taken so that such evil is completely wiped out and not allowed to appear elsewhere. We endorse the view and resolve of Special Representative Kubiš that determining the circumstances surrounding the significant loss of life will be an important step in the mourning process for families and along their journey to secure their right to truth and justice.

We welcome UNAMI's communication with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Iraq and the Embassy of Kuwait in Baghdad to schedule an official handover of the first package of the located Kuwaiti property. We praise the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Iraq for its readiness to surrender Kuwaiti property to UNAMI to be safeguarded until the date of the transfer is set by the parties. We also consider it important that closing the file on missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, will contribute to normalizing relations between the two brotherly countries. We ask the tripartite mechanism to persevere and remain seized of the matter.

The world community should remain committed to supporting the Government and the people of Iraq in their various historic endeavours, and Kazakhstan will be a strong partner in the multilateral action and process. We again thank outgoing Special Representative Ján Kubiš for his dedication and contribution to the settlement of Iraqi issues and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate the convening of this meeting and the important briefing by Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

Peru is following closely recent developments in Iraq. We note the conclusion of the electoral process. We believe that the recount of votes and the resolution of registered complaints reflect the proper functioning of the institutions and the rule of law that the country requires to peacefully resolve disputes. We expect the rapid establishment of a new Government capable of facing the country's important and urgent challenges and responding to the legitimate demands of citizens with a view to building sustainable peace in Iraq and the region in a new phase following the terrorism of Da'esh.

We emphasize the importance of the greater participation by Iraqi women in the political life of the country. We join the Secretary-General in calling for political leaders and the Council of Representatives to fulfil their commitment to elect women to high-level political positions.

Moreover, we note with concern the protests in Basra, among other places, where the population has mobilized to demand more effective action by the authorities to solve such basic problems as a lack of water, fragile infrastructure and basic services, and high youth unemployment. We regret that the violent nature of some protests and the subsequent repression produced fatalities. We recognize the right of citizens to protest peacefully and stress the need for law enforcement to always act with caution, proportionality and full respect for human rights.

We underline the importance of the State enjoying the support of all sectors of Iraqi society and the international community to deal with the remaining terrorists and ensure that those responsible for the atrocious crimes committed in Iraq are duly prosecuted. In that connection, we reaffirm the importance of the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Ms. Nadia Murad, increasing the visibility of the issue and encouraging adequate attention to be paid to the thousands of Iraqi women victims of Da'esh sexual violence.

We also consider it necessary to overcome the reported disagreements regarding the structure and deployment of the popular mobilization forces. As the Secretary-General has pointed out, Iraq must be able to pursue its national interests without becoming a theatre for the clash of regional interests.

We consider it important that the new Government, with the support of the international community, be able to promote greater investment in reconstruction and in the inclusive and sustainable development of the country, generating employment and opportunities to reverse the lack of confidence among the citizens and prevent new outbreaks of extremism and insurgency — especially considering that Da'esh has been defeated but not eliminated. In that regard, and by way of conclusion, we welcome the progress of the recovery and resilience Programme proposed by the Secretary-General and highlight the support offered within its scope by UNAMI, the United Nations country team, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank.

Finally, we would like to reiterate our appreciation to Mr. Ján Kubiš for his outstanding work at the Head

of UNAMI as Special Representative of the Secretary-General during a difficult and crucial period for Iraq. It is work that we are sure will be continued with equal success by his successor, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert.

Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren (Netherlands): I would like to start by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, for his briefing — his final one to the Security Council in his current capacity.

Please allow me to focus on three important aspects: the formation of the new Government, inclusive Government and accountability.

First, on the formation of the new Government, we congratulate and commend Iraq on the formation of the new Government within the constitutional time frame and look forward to the appointment of the remaining ministerial positions. Iraq has taken a very important step this year towards democracy and long-term stability. Prime Minister Abdul-Mahdi presented an ambitious programme and took initial significant steps in favour of proximity to the Iraqi people, transparency and reform. We are encouraged by those early signals and expect that the Prime Minister and his Government will continue to be inclusive and representative of Iraq's diversity when implementing that programme.

We also welcome the elections that took place in the Kurdistan Region. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/975) spoke of a positive trend in the communication between Baghdad and Erbil, a dialogue that we hope to see continued and intensified. Equally important is the need for the new Government to increase efforts to meet the legitimate demands of its people and provide basic public services. That includes safe and sufficient drinking water, electricity, the creation of job opportunities and countering corruption. Iraq can count on the Netherlands to back such efforts — politically, financially and through our private sector — as we have done over the past years. We are in full support of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Iraq, which will allow it to form and exercise the new Government.

My second point is that a diverse society wants to see itself reflected in its elected leaders and in a Government that is inclusive and representative and includes the meaningful participation of women. Iraq can be proud that it has historically been at the forefront of women's empowerment in the Arab world, with the first Arab female minister nominated in 1959. That example can still be replicated. The meaningful, political, social and economic participation of women is ever so important in view of the dark period in its history that Iraq and the Iraqi people experienced. That is why I want to take this opportunity to commend Nadia Murad for being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of her voice, advocacy and all Yazidi and other Iraqis who suffered as a result of sexual violence and atrocities committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS).

Providing victims with means for their rehabilitation and reintegration into society is a priority area for Iraq's second national action plan on implementing resolution 1325 (2000). But in the aftermath of the defeat of ISIS the focus will also be on other areas of the national action plan, such as the social and economic empowerment of women, which Suzan Araf Maroof spoke about that in the Council in August (see S/PV.8324). In that respect, we encourage the Government to take steps to end impunity for perpetrators of gender-based violence —for example, by considering a law on violence against women that criminalizes such violence, as other countries in the region have implemented. In today's Iraq the talents of all its people are indispensable, including those of women and young people, for its economy to grow and deliver a better future for all Iraqi citizens — men, women and children alike.

Finally, I want to mark the continuing engagement of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) on ISIS accountability and the commencement of the work by the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL. Earlier this month, UNAMI and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights published an important report entitled *Unearthing Atrocities: Mass Graves in Territory Formerly Controlled by ISIL*. Reportedly, an overwhelming majority of those graves contained victims of ISIS. So far 1,258 bodies have been exhumed, but it is estimated that there are human remains of between 6,000 and 12,000 people.

The task for UNAMI, the Investigative Team and the Iraqi Government is vast, that is, to secure, collect and preserve evidence and to give information to the families of the many missing. That is why the Netherlands has decided to contribute financially to the work of Investigative Team. We look forward to Special Adviser Khan's first briefing in December.

We encourage the new Government to continue to collaborate closely with both UNAMI and the Investigative Team on the collection, preservation and storing of evidence of those crimes that may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

In our belief that there should be accountability in accordance with international standards, and looking towards the future, we call upon the new Iraqi Government — as we do on all others that have not done so yet — to ratify and implement the Rome Statute and, as such, recognize the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.

In conclusion, I want to pay tribute to Special Representative Kubiš for the excellent work he was able to carry out with his team in implementing UNAMI's challenging tasks over the past three years and nine months. We look forward to working with the designated Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, who will start in December. We wish her a lot of success.

Mr. Lewicki (Poland): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Ján Kubiš for his informative briefing. Let me also express our most sincere gratitude for his outstanding service and enormous contribution to peace and stability in Iraq. We look forward to closely working with Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert. Let me also reiterate our appreciation for the tremendous work that the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) is doing in assisting the Iraqi authorities.

Let me begin by commending Iraq for the completion of the electoral process within the constitutional time frame and by welcoming the election of Mr. Barham Salih as President of the Republic of Iraq and of Mr. Mohammed al-Halbousi as the Speaker of the Council of Representatives. As pointed out by Mr. Kubiš, it was an exemplary, democratic and peaceful transfer of power. We also welcome the partial formation of a new Government by Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi and the adoption of the Government programme by the new Council of Representatives. We are confident that the appointment of the remaining members of the Cabinet will be completed soon. We urge the political parties to work constructively to that end and contribute to the swift formation of an effective Administration. We would also like to welcome the elections held in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region and the progress made in relations between Baghdad and Erbil. We call upon them to capitalize on that positive trend and resolve all outstanding issues through dialogue and consensus, based on the full application of the provisions of the Iraqi Constitution.

With the electoral process completed, we encourage the political parties in Iraq to work constructively towards the implementation of political, economic and social reforms, as well as the advancement of stabilization and reconstruction in the areas liberated from Da'esh. As the developments in the past months have shown, Iraqi citizens need an accountable and efficient Administration that would address the expectations of all groups of Iraqi society.

Therefore, we would like to draw the attention of the new Iraqi Government to the need to focus on the delivery of basic public services and tangible benefits for all Iraqis, including providing good governance, creating job opportunities, improving living conditions, fighting corruption and promoting economic development. Last but not least, we believe that consolidating security, law and order and providing for the return of internally displaced persons should also be among the most important areas of the new Government's focus.

We regret that none of the well-qualified female politicians were elected to senior leadership positions. We call upon the political leaders to ensure the appointment of women to senior positions within the new Administration and their representation at the highest levels of decision-making structures. There is no peace without justice, we have already said so in this Chamber on a number of occasions, and it also relates to Iraq.

That is why we believe that special emphasis must also be placed on the issue of serving justice to the victims of atrocities committed by terrorist groups, based on fair-trial requirements and in accordance with international standards. We express our full support to the Investigative Team tasked with assisting Iraq in holding accountable the perpetrators of violence. We strongly urge the Iraqi authorities to include sexual and gender-based crimes and other internationally recognized crimes in the prosecution of Da'esh fighters.

We hope that the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Nadia Murad will provide further impetus to ensure justice for women and members of religious minorities in Iraq, who are victims of outrageous and unthinkable violence by Da'esh. We also call upon the Iraqi authorities to ensure the provision of humanitarian

assistance, protection and the integration of women and children who are of Da'esh families that have no link with Da'esh.

In conclusion, let me express Poland's readiness to cooperate closely with the new Government of Iraq as well as our full support for the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is grateful for the briefing delivered by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Mr. Ján Kubiš. We wish to echo what has already been expressed by other members of the Security Council in thanking him for his work and efforts on dialogue and coordination that have been carried out on everyone's behalf. Much of what we recognize as a triumph for the Iraqi people is due in large part to the efforts by him and his team.

We commend the convening of the parliamentary elections held on 12 May, which were carried out in an orderly manner and in an environment free from violence. We wish to highlight the certification of those election results on 19 August by the Federal Supreme Court and the subsequent vote on 20 October of the Council of Representatives, which resulted in Mr. Barham Salih being elected as President of Iraq, who in turn appointed Mr. Adil Abdul-Mahdi as Prime Minister-designate. We emphasize the spirit of democracy and participation demonstrated by the Iraqi people throughout that process and we call on the elected representatives and all of the political actors involved to enter into dialogue and negotiations that will allow them to build a solid institutional framework and stable governance to the benefit of the Iraqi people.

The newly elected authorities have a long road ahead, including confronting the challenges that have arisen in the south of the country, where it is now urgent to implement actions in order to guarantee access to basic services for the population and prevent the emergence of violence, which would derail the reconstruction and reconciliation efforts that must prevail in this new phase. This is also an opportunity that should be used to strengthen the dialogue and good relations between Erbil and Baghdad.

Despite the progress made, we note with deep concern that the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/975) shows that attacks are still being perpetrated by Da'esh, and that that terrorist group remains capable of coordinating and carrying out attacks against the civilian population, civil and diplomatic infrastructure, as well as against the forces of law and order, such as those that have been reported in Baghdad, Ninawa and Kirkuk, among others.

We are horrified by the 202 mass graves that have been identified, which, according to the report by UNAMI and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, contain the bodies of approximately 12,000 Da'esh victims — mainly women, children, people with disabilities and members of the Iraqi forces. That high number of victims, which could yet increase considerably, highlights the brutality and criminality of that terrorist organization and the urgent need to identify the perpetrators so that they can be held accountable for their actions.

In that regard, we encourage the Government of Iraq to make every effort to preserve the integrity of those mass graves, not only to identify the victims and return the bodies to the families, but also to collect and preserve as much evidence as possible to ensure that the violations of human dignity do not go unpunished. For that reason, it is important to promote capacity-building in Iraqi institutions in order to implement plans for the establishment of genetic databases that will allow for the exhumation, identification and preservation of the bodies of victims, which will strengthen the investigative work. The involvement of the Investigative Team established pursuant to resolution 2379 (2017) is essential to strengthening that work. It is also important to set up and implement, in the short and medium term, mechanisms for reparations to victims, which should include policies to promote memory, among others.

To achieve that goal, the cooperation of the various offices and agencies of the United Nations, as well as the wider international community, is essential to developing the technical capabilities of the Iraqi State. In that regard, we hope that the recommendations issued by UNAMI and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in their report from 6 November will be reviewed and implemented.

We also wish to highlight the work of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in the identification of improvised explosive devices, anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war on Iraqi territory. We note in particular the removal of explosives that were submerged below the Fallujah iron bridge, as well as the launching of training workshops

on the safe elimination of explosive devices for police officers from the Ninawa, Al-Anbar and Kirkuk governorates, among others, in order to tackle the possible threats posed by the existence of those devices in the liberated areas. We also stress the essential role played by UNMAS in the clearing of improvised explosive devices that could be contaminating the mass graves found in the territories previously controlled by Da'esh.

We commend the efforts made by Iraq in identifying the areas where other mass graves might exist, as well as the work carried out on the recovery and return of assets of Kuwaiti heritage. We also take note of the data, maps and satellite images shared with the International Committee of the Red Cross to facilitate that process. However, we regret that there has been no progress made in the returning of Kuwaiti property that has been found so far, given that they have already gone through a process of cataloguing in Iraq. We stress the importance of the return of those assets for the reconciliation process and the strengthening of relations between Iraq and Kuwait. We note the willingness of UNAMI to facilitate that transfer and provide logistical assistance to those efforts.

To conclude, I wish to once again express, through the representative of Iraq, the recognition of my people and my Government to the people and the Government of Iraq for having overcome such difficult years, which has been and will continue to be an example for all of humankind. We appreciate the sacrifices that they have made on everyone's behalf.

Mr. Esono Mbengono (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to thank the team of Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), for their comprehensive and detailed briefing, in which the main events of the past quarter were highlighted. My delegation is pleased to note that the Parliament of the Republic of Iraq has finally elected a President, a duty that has been granted to Mr. Barham Salih, whom we congratulate and to whom we wish every success throughout his time in office. We also welcome the appointment of the new Prime Minister.

We believe that the election of the new President represents not only a further step towards ending the political crisis that had left the country at a standstill since the elections on 12 May, but also sends out a clear message on the political will of the Iraqi people and leaders to collaborate in facilitating the process of democratization that is already under way in the country. We hope that all political parties will support and respect that decision. Like many other countries, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea wishes to urge the newly elected President to support the political will of the people by promoting policies of national unity that take into account the concerns of citizens from all social strata and all of the different peoples that make up the State of Iraq, while underscoring the urgent need to continue working to address the differences between the central Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government.

In that regard, it is important to highlight the important work carried out by UNAMI, which particularly supported the electoral process and supports the new Government's policy to guarantee the progress of the State reconstruction process, which requires promoting an increasingly inclusive political dialogue and reconciliation. On the parliamentary elections held in Kurdistan on 30 September, we commend the fact that they took place successfully and we call on the main political parties to respect the final outcomes of those elections, and that all of the complaints that arise be dealt with according to established legal procedures.

We wish to voice our concern about the violent incidents outlined in the report (S/2018/975), carried out in the form of street demonstrations in the south and other parts of Iraq, which, unfortunately, have even affected the security of certain resident diplomatic offices and Consulates. We hope that the local authorities will be able to deal with the situation and address with due attention the grievances and concerns of the demonstrators, those of which seemingly pertain to the basic needs of the citizens. However, we also take into account the actions taken by the Parliament and the Government, which include certain measures towards finding a satisfactory solution to that situation. We commend the tireless work of the Iraqi security forces for their ongoing clean-up of areas that have been cleared of explosives and other dangerous materials, as well as for their continued search for the remnants of Da'esh, which threaten the security of the population and hinder the ongoing process.

I would like to express our sincere appreciation and recognition for the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, which is perceived positively and favourably in various areas of Iraqi society, such as

the public sector, electoral processes, human rights and the rule of law and operational and security issues. We would like to reiterate our recognition and gratitude to Special Representative Ján Kubiš for his commitment and tireless efforts in leading UNAMI over the past nearly four years. We wish him all the best in his future activities. Finally, we urge all the members of the Council and the international community to continue to support the Iraqi people and their President on their path to democracy and the reconsolidation of the State, whose stability is fundamental to that of the entire region.

Mr. Hickey (United Kingdom): First, let me join others in thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ján Kubiš, both for his briefings and all the work he has done over the past three years and nine months as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. We are grateful for his leadership of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the significant contribution he has made to Iraq during this pivotal period in its history. We look forward to welcoming in December his successor, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, and working with her to build on all the progress that he has made. Like the Netherlands, today I would like to touch upon three issues: Government formation, accountability and the question of missing Kuwaiti persons and property.

First, the United Kingdom joins other Council members in congratulating Iraq on the conclusion of the 2018 electoral process. We especially congratulate President Barham Salih, Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi and Speaker Mohammed al-Halbousi, as well as the Kurdistan Democratic Party following the Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections. We welcome the formation of the Cabinet, which is well under way, and encourage the appointment of the remaining Cabinet members to be done in an inclusive manner and within the constitutional timelines. However, like the representatives of Poland, the Netherlands and others, we share the disappointment at the lack of female members among those appointed to the Cabinet to date, and we would encourage the Iraqi Government in its efforts to address that issue and promote the participation and representation of women at all levels of decision-making in Iraq.

Once the Government has been fully formed, the United Kingdom looks forward to working with it to support it as it tackles the challenges that Iraq faces, those which the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has outlined for us today. Those include promoting effective governance, security sector and economic reform, social protection for vulnerable groups — including internally displaced people — and improvements in the business environment. Recent events that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has highlighted, particularly in southern Iraq, demonstrate the importance of providing basic services, including water and electricity, for all Iraqis.

Women have a vital role to play in all of the areas that I have just mentioned, including national reconciliation efforts. We note the encouraging progress in that regard. In particular, we welcome the introduction of the inter-agency gender-based violence standard operating procedures in southern Iraq, which will provide essential support services for survivors of gender-based violence. The United Kingdom encourages the incoming Government to ensure the full implementation of Iraq's national action plan on women and peace and security.

Several speakers this morning have spoken about the importance of accountability in Iraq. The scale of the challenges facing the new Iraqi Government are clear. For example, the recent discovery of over 200 mass-grave sites demonstrates the importance of achieving justice for the victims of Da'esh crimes in Iraq. Those graves must be protected to ensure that the evidence can be properly collected and stored. The United Kingdom welcomes the continued strong support from both the Government of Iraq and UNAMI for the important work of the United Nations Investigative Team for the Accountability of Da'esh. I would also like to extend my own congratulations to Nadia Murad for her well-deserved Nobel Peace Prize. Efforts must continue to locate those still missing following their brutal kidnapping by Da'esh.

Thirdly, and finally, the United Kingdom would like to thank the Secretary-General for his latest report (S/2018/976) on resolution 2107 (2013) on the issue of missing Kuwaiti persons and property. The United Kingdom welcomes UNAMI's ongoing support on that important file. We hope that the new Government of Iraq will make progress on locating and identifying missing Kuwaiti persons and property. In that regard, the United Kingdom welcomes the visit by the Iraqi President to Kuwait on 12 November, and in particular the transfer that took place of one instalment of retrieved Kuwaiti property. It is very important that

this chapter of Iraq and Kuwait's history can be closed and that relations between those two neighbours can be further strengthened.

Mr. Woldegerima (Ethiopia): We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ján Kubiš for his briefing on the latest developments in Iraq and the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). Since that was his last briefing, we take this opportunity to express our appreciation to him for all his dedicated efforts and leadership as the Head of UNAMI at a critical time in Iraq. We wish him all the very best in his future endeavours. We also welcome the appointment of Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head UNAMI.

We commend the people of Iraq on the completion of their 2018 national electoral process, which paved the way for the Government-formation process. We join others in congratulating the people and the Government of Iraq for their achievement. We highlight the holding of the first session of the Council of Representatives and welcome the election of the Speaker of the Council of Representatives and of the President of the Republic of Iraq and the appointment of the Prime Minister. We welcome the peaceful transfer of power within the constitutional timeline. We hope the new Government will deliver on its programme in order to meet the hopes and expectations of the Iraqi people. We recognize the enormous challenge that Iraq continues to face. It is vital that the new leadership and the Government build on the important progress made in the past years to rebuild the country.

As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/975), we are also encouraged by the progress made with regard to the relations between Baghdad and Erbil, including the discussions between the federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government over outstanding issues. We also note the engagement between Baghdad and Erbil on the political process in Iraq, particularly in the new Iraqi Government-formation process. We hope the federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government will further capitalize on the recently generated positive momentum.

Despite the remarkable progress made recently, we note that terrorism remains a serious challenge. We commend the Iraqi Government and its security forces for their continued efforts aimed at clearing the remnants of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant from the Iraqi territory, particularly from the north and north-central parts of the country. We believe there is a need for a comprehensive approach to addressing the security challenges and ensuring durable peace, promoting national unity, stability and reconciliation, addressing the humanitarian situation and rebuilding Iraqi economy and infrastructure.

In that regard, enhanced international and regional cooperation is critical. We support the call of the Secretary-General on the need to honour the pledges made at the Kuwait International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq. We commend the Iraqi Government for its continued efforts to reach out to neighbouring countries and other international partners to strengthen bilateral relations and advance mutual political and security interests.

In conclusion, we appreciate the role of UNAMI in supporting and accompanying the Iraqi people and the Government to ensure a smooth political transition at this critical juncture in the political history of the country. It is important that UNAMI continue to lend its support to the new Government of Iraq as it embarks on implementing its new programme to address the many complex and difficult challenges and put the country on the path of sustainable peace and reconstruction. We hope that the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General will build on the good work done over the past three years and nine months.

Mr. Vaverka (Sweden): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Kubiš for his briefing. Let me join others in expressing our sincere gratitude for all the work he has done in support of Iraq during his time as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. We very much appreciate his tireless efforts, including his firm commitment on women and peace and security and, under his leadership, the advocacy efforts of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to promote women in political and decision-making processes in Iraq.

Let me start by welcoming the confirmation of President Barham Salih and Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi. The partial formation of the Council of Ministers is encouraging. At the same time, we are disappointed by the lack of women among the ministers so far appointed. As inclusiveness and representation are key in the Government-formation process, I join

others in calling for the consideration of women candidates for the remaining Cabinet posts.

Iraq needs a stable national Government that brings Iraqis together and restores hope going forward. In the aftermath of the defeat of Da'esh, it is particularly important for the Iraqi people to feel that their voices matter and that they have an accountable Government. As has been underlined throughout this meeting this morning, the resurgence of Da'esh must be avoided.

As the new Government now gets to work and starts addressing the many challenges that lie ahead, intensified efforts are needed to advance political and economic reforms, address basic-service delivery, fight corruption and strengthen the rule of law. The economic prospects for all Iraqis, not least the youth, must also be improved. Success will require strong national leadership, but also international support, including by a united Security Council. A long-term perspective is needed for continued and coordinated international efforts in support of Iraq.

To ensure long-term peace and development, the root causes of conflict must be addressed. That includes the distribution of resources and influence among different groups in society. Reconciliation is critical to building a stable country and preventing future conflicts, and accountability is, in turn, crucial for reconciliation.

Sweden supports initiatives to strengthen accountability for violations of international law. We welcome resolution 2379 (2017), on the United Nations Investigative Team to hold Da'esh accountable. That is an important first step in holding those responsible for the atrocities carried out by Da'esh to account. We are pleased that Special Adviser Karim Khan has started his important mission and look forward to his first briefing to the Council.

Like others, I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Nadia Murad for being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to end sexual violence against women in conflict. We also welcome that Iraq has adopted a national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000). We encourage UNAMI to assist the Government in the implementation of the plan, including protecting internally displaced people from sexual violence.

We welcome progress made in the dialogue between Baghdad and Erbil. With the new Government in place, the dialogue should be fully resumed, with both sides showing good faith and a constructive approach. We encourage the United Nations to use its good offices to facilitate dialogue among Iraqi stakeholders. UNAMI's role remains crucial, and its political mission must be fully utilized. We welcome the Mission's strengthened mandate, in particular with regard to the role of women and the situation of children. Rehabilitation and reintegration must be prioritized.

The inclusion — for the first time — of an operational women and peace and security component in the mandate will allow the Mission to further focus on those issues. Implementation is now key, and adequate financial resources are needed. How the Mission will mainstream gender as a cross-cutting issue must be followed up and reported upon. We appreciate the advocacy efforts that have already been made to promote the effective participation of women in political and decision-making processes.

Finally, Iraq must be able to pursue its own national interests and not become a proxy for confrontation by regional interests. We strongly emphasize the need for the continued respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Iraq, and we welcome Prime Minister Abdul-Mahdi's approach in that regard. As Iraq moves forward on its path towards reconciliation, stability and sustained peace, it can continue to count on Sweden's support. Strong national leadership and the unity of the Council will be critical for sustainable peace in Iraq.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Kubiš for his briefing. I highly commend his efforts in leading the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) during his tenure as Head of the Mission.

China congratulates His Excellency Mr. Barham Salih on his election as President of Iraq. China welcomes the progress made in forming the new Iraq Government and hopes that the new Government will continue to promote economic development, improve people's living conditions and accelerate Iraq's reconstruction process. As mentioned by other colleagues before me, peace, stability and reconstruction in Iraq are now at a critical stage. I would like to make the following points.

First, the general direction towards a political solution to the Iraqi issue should be adhered to. The parties in Iraq should, within framework of the Constitution, settle their differences through dialogue, promote national reconciliation and achieve lasting peace and security in the country. The international community should effectively respect the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq, support the United Nations in its good offices and provide constructive assistance for an inclusive political solution.

Secondly, there should be continued support for combating terrorism in Iraq. The relevant parties should strengthen counter-terrorism cooperation, unify standards and fight against all Council-listed terrorist organizations, as well as resolutely contain terrorist forces and curb the return of their activities and the momentum of their spread. The international community should support Iraq in its effort to bring perpetrators to justice in accordance with its domestic law.

Thirdly, efforts must be made to actively push for the economic recovery and accelerated reconstruction of Iraq. The Iraqi Government should speed up its national reconstruction process, give full play to its resource advantages, promote its economic development, enhance its capacity to provide public services and improve people's livelihoods. The international community should continue to provide support and assistance to Iraq, help ease its humanitarian situation, assist in its economic recovery and create a favourable environment for the national reconstruction of the country.

UNAMI has played an important role in supporting the Iraqi Government for an inclusive political dialogue and national reconciliation and reconstruction, and it is continuing to push for enhanced bilateral relations between Iraq and countries of the region, such as Kuwait, as well as the settlement of the remaining bilateral issues. The international community should jointly support UNAMI in carrying out its work according with its mandate.

China supports any efforts conducive to the political settlement of the Iraqi issue and the fight against terrorism. As always, China will participate in the economic reconstruction of Iraq and continue to provide assistance to the best of its ability.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me, Mr. President, to congratulate you and the People's Republic of China on presiding over the Security Council this month and to express my thanks for the efforts you are making to organize the Council's work. I would also like to thank the State of Bolivia for its efforts during its presidency of the Council last month.

It is my pleasure to welcome the briefing of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Mr. Ján Kubiš. I commend his tireless and sincere work and that of his team. We are especially grateful for his efforts and excellent leadership of the work of UNAMI throughout the past years, which have been full of challenges. I also would like to congratulate his successor Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert. We look forward to expanding bilateral cooperation with her to serve the interests and needs of Iraq pursuant to the mandate of UNAMI. We underscore our country's full support for her.

My Government also wants to thank His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres for accepting our request to extend the mandate of Mr Kubiš until mid-January. We further thank the members of the Security Council for supporting our request, which will contribute to the continuation of the successes achieved by the formation of the Government.

Iraqis have successfully concluded their parliamentary elections. The political blocs and the Iraqi Council of Representatives were an exemplary model of democracy and peaceful transfer of power through the election of His Excellency Mr. Barham Salih as President of the Republic, as well as the formation of the Government with Mr. Adil Abdul-Mahdi as the Prime Minister, in addition to the selection of the Speaker of the Council of Representatives Mr. Mohammad Al-Halbousi within the time frame set out by the Constitution. Those three events this year reflected a desire to form an inclusive Government that represents Iraq's social and political unity — a Government that is able to meet the aspirations of the Iraqi people in the upcoming phase.

The newly elected Government has adopted a comprehensive ministerial plan based on security, economic and social pillars, which will serve all Iraqi

citizens. I would like to summarize this plan in the following points.

First, the Government will attach special attention to the provision of basic services in the Basra governorate, liberated areas and other Iraqi governorates. We will give more attention to resolving pending issues with the Kurdistan region, in particular with regard to issues of oil and financial management. We will work to enhance national identity and promote community participation and the protection of human rights in order to achieve social peace, stability and security.

Secondly, we will work to achieve development and economic goals. We will implement a policy of economic reform and carry out a transition from a revenue economy to a market economy through the implementation of development plans that target vital economic sectors that directly influence citizens' lives. We will provide support for the private sector so that it will contribute to economic growth. We will diversify our resources so that we do not rely heavily on oil revenues.

Thirdly, we will establish a system of good governance in Iraq through the implementation of the good governance compact adopted by the Cabinet in 2017, which stresses the importance of improving our financial and operational performance and the provision of services to citizens. In this regard, we hope that friendly States will invest in the process of national capacity-building.

Fourthly, we will continue to work hard and with resolve, in cooperation with all actors, to fight corruption in all its forms and manifestations, as it is one of the main obstacles to good governance in Iraq.

Fifthly, we will work to strategically allocate financial resources based on a programme that prioritizes the reform of public financial management, which is one of the Iraqi Government's main priorities.

Sixthly, we will follow up on the outcome of the International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq, hosted by the sisterly State of Kuwait. We urge friendly States to fulfil their pledges, as we have high hopes for that outcome. The reconstruction of Iraq is no less important than fighting terrorism. We call on the international community to support Iraq and its Government in the reconstruction of infrastructure in all Iraqi cities. That is an important and crucial element in achieving economic prosperity in the country.

Iraq is at the threshold of a new phase following our victory in the justified war against the terrorist gangs of Da'esh. This requires support and cooperation so that we can tackle the challenges of the post-Da'esh phase. Iraq has natural and human resources that will enable us to become a developed country. We should therefore focus on achieving political, economic, security and social stability as a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development, promoting rights and freedoms and achieving social justice.

My Government is stepping up its efforts to eliminate all terrorist cells and to prevent their return in any form or under any name. Therefore, we will attach special importance to the ongoing capacity-building of our armed forces in all its categories, including the army, the police, the counter-terrorism apparatus, Peshmerga and the popular mobilization forces. We insist on prohibiting any military or armed formations outside State control.

We are coordinating with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate. In that connection, this month my Government launched several counter-terrorism projects, including youth capacity-building, providing employment for youth, combating the financing of terrorism and violent extremism through strategic contacts, and prohibiting weapons of mass destruction. Those projects meet 4 of the 16 priorities that were identified by the Counter-Terrorism Committee and adopted by the Government of Iraq in 2015.

The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Nadia Murad, an Iraqi citizen, is an acknowledgement by the world of the tragedy of Yazidis and all victims of terrorism and takfiri discourse in Iraq. The award honoured her courage and perseverance to defend the usurped rights, as well as the steadfastness of Iraqis in countering terrorism and extremism.

Iraq derives strength from its cultural, religious and ethnic diversity, as well its rich history. We need all strata of society to rebuild and achieve stability in the post-Da'esh period so that we can maintain the unity and stability of the country. Since 2003, successive Governments have worked to uphold and protect those principles, which we have done by adhering to our Constitution and applicable laws created to guarantee protection and decent living standards for all.

In this context, we find it odd that the Secretary-General includes strange references to racial discrimination in his report (S/2018/975). Racial discrimination does not exist in Iraq. These references, particularly in the light of the delicate circumstances in which my country finds itself, constitute a serious precedent that could undermine social peace. All Iraqis enjoy their civil and political rights, which are guaranteed by the Constitution and national legislation. There is no discrimination against any social group. Discriminatory discourse does not exist in Iraq.

The new Government will continue to apply the same approach to humanitarian solutions for the return of the families of Da'esh terrorist gangs. We are giving priority to their psychological and mental rehabilitation and their reintegration into their communities, once we are sure that they have been rehabilitated. In this regard, competent authorities in Iraq are considering a plan of action to prevent the recruitment of children that has been submitted by the United Nations country team.

We are fully aware that we must not overlook the important role of Iraqi women and their efforts to restore stability and achieving community reconciliation in the liberated areas. A conference was held in Baghdad to launch the Iraqi national action plan on resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. The national action plan will enhance the role and responsibilities of Iraqi women in support of post-Da'esh peacebuilding. We are working to include women in the new Iraqi Government at all levels and to the greatest extent possible.

My country faces many difficulties and challenges, primary among which is the lack of medical and technical capacity to clear landmines and unexploded ordnance, which remain among the principal hindrances to the return of internally displaced families to the liberated areas. In this regard, we stress once again the urgent need to support the work of the United Nations Mine Action Service. We urge donor States to continue to support Iraq in mine-clearance.

My Government believes that certain countries, including Iraq, that have suffered from terrorism and serious crimes committed by criminal groups and terrorist gangs turn to capital punishment as one element of achieving justice for the victims and their families, in accordance with article 6.2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It is a sovereign right of those States to do so. Capital punishment in Iraq is related to terrorist crimes. We apply fair and thorough trial procedures, taking into consideration the right of the accused to defend themselves and appeal. In that regard, we note that Iraq's penal code does not include provisions that cover international crimes, such as war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. We are working hard to finalize draft legislation on those particular crimes. This legislation would apply to the crimes committed by the Da'esh terrorists.

My Government is working to establish strategic partnerships with regional and international actors based on common interest in order to promote Iraq's status in the international community and resolve pending issues with neighbouring countries and others. We look forward to achieving peace, security and development. We enjoy a relationship of joint cooperation with the riparian States so that we can achieve a fair and equitable sharing of benefits based on the principles of international law. That would avert regional tension and instability. In this regard, Iraq expects UNAMI to play an active role, in accordance with its mandate.

In connection with enhancing bilateral relations with neighbouring States, Iraq looks forward to reaching an equitable joint formula for water-sharing quotas with those States, as a result of the great pressure exerted on the Tigris and Euphrates basin by climate change, competition and inequitable use of joint water resources. A large percentage of Iraqi land is under the threat of desertification due to climate change and water scarcity, which would clearly have a negative impact on the fertility of the land.

Iraq underscores once again that we will not accept the use of our territories by groups, whether they reside in those territories or are merely passing through, to launch attacks against neighbouring countries. In return, we hope that those States will act in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations while respecting our sovereignty. We hope that future reports of the Secretary-General will include elements on the impact of unilateral measures and violations by certain States that would lead to political and security instability in Iraq.

We would like to stress once again the good fraternal relations we enjoy with the State of Kuwait. My Government is working to improve this relationship at the political and economic levels. It is worth mentioning that the President of the Republic of Iraq, Mr. Barham

Salih, chose Kuwait as the site of his first official visit outside the country, on 11 November. This attests to the importance of Kuwait to Iraq. We are working to close the files pending between the two States, including the Kuwaiti National Archive, and submitted a package of television archives to Kuwait on 12 November.

My country is committed to making every effort to progress on the file of Kuwaiti prisoners and missing persons. We are striving to honour in full our commitments under resolution 2107 (2013), including by determining the facts surrounding the remaining Kuwaiti prisoners and missing persons and third-country nationals. Most recently, the Ministry of Defence called on all Iraqi citizens to provide information on the remains of Iraqi or Kuwaiti citizens who went missing in the 1991 war, in addition to Kuwaiti property. We have also run advertisements urging them to provide such information.

I note that the mechanism is pursuing excavation and exploration work under the supervision of the International Committee of the Red Cross. We thank France, the United States and the United Kingdom for providing the mechanism with maps. We hope that the United Nations will allow the mechanism to use ground-penetrating radar and provide technical support, despite the obstacles pertaining to the mechanism's limited budget.

In conclusion, the new Government of Iraq is determined to implement the ministerial plan identifying the national and social priorities of Iraq and its citizens We hope that the international community will continue to support us as we seek to ensure the stability and prosperity of Iraq and its people.

Finally, we reiterate our thanks to Mr. Kubiš for his years of service and wise leadership of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. We are grateful for the work of his team in Iraq and New York to assist Iraq within the mandate of the Mission. We look forward to working with Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert and wish her and her team every success.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.